

Dr A. Bowen

“I don’t think you’ll be able to stop me,”

Dr. A. Bowen is an **archaeologist** with a lot of **field work experience** in exotic locations: Egypt, Mali, Laos, Malaysia, various Middle East sites. Bowen enjoys getting what they want, and has a history of applying **underhanded and mercenary means** to secure dig sites. **Gun, knife** and **fist** are familiar tools, although Bowen **suffers psychologically after effects** from inflicting violence.

Background

You are no stranger to violence and intimidation. These are the means that you use to secure various dig sites, such as at the Temple of Set in Egypt, where you employed violence to chase off workers. You’ve also hired mercenaries to intimidate archaeologists into leaving their digs, allowing you to secure important finds for yourself.

Recently you’ve been in contact with **Professor Gregory Jenkins**, the head of Princeton’s department of Archeology and Antiquities. He wants you to help secure a site on the Greek island of Kleitos. Interestingly, it seems that their lead archaeologist, Dr. James Templeton, has gone missing. Templeton is one of the only people who managed to beat you at your own game of violence and intimidation — it would be good to be involved in his operation and see if you can coerce his hand in a way beneficial to you. Or just hurt him.

Setting the Scene

Prof. Jenkins wants to see you in person, and his department pays for your trip to his office. You find yourself amongst a group of four other people in Prof. Jenkins’s lavish third floor office: Prof. Jenkins himself; Dr. Singh, a paleontologist; Prof. Giles, a classicist and philologist; and Dr. Wrona, a psychologist and specialist in the occult.

Prof. Jenkins is an old man close to 70. He walks slowly, with an obvious limp, and supports himself with an ornate cane. His office is fairly luxurious, with a large, solid wooden desk sitting in front of the windows. Various antiquities decorate the office: pottery in glass cabinets, statues great and small on desks and shelves, weapons and armor hang on display. Most of the artifacts appear to be Greek, or related to Greek mythology.

After passing out drinks (whiskey, coffee and tea), Prof. Jenkins explains the work that he has brought you together for.

A few months ago, **Dr James Templeton** from the department led an expedition to explore the ruins of the **Acropolis Achlys** on **Kleitos Island**, one of the Greek islands in the Aegean sea. Achlys was rumored to have once been the home to one of the darker mystery cults that had built a community for itself around the **Oracle of Echidna**, who was one of the chthonic Greek gods, a nymph who was often called the **Mother of all Monsters**. This was the only known Oracle to the god, and Templeton had reported that his team had found the ruins and begun the excavation work.

“Three months ago,” Jenkins says, “James sent this letter and a roll of 620 film, which I’ve had developed” He hands you note 1.

“As you can see,” he says, “we’re in need of a paleontologist. **Dr Singh**, well, you were James’s

Prof Jenkins
Department of Archeology and Antiquities
Princeton University
Princeton, New Jersey
USA

Dr. James Templeton
Kleitos Island
c/o Demetrios Patsatzoglou, Magnisias Town

Dear Gregory,

I hope this letter finds you well.

We have made an amazing discovery! A week ago we found the petrified remains of the strangest creature buried in the tomb region of the Oracle: a chimera of sorts, some blend of snake and human, like the lamia or drakaina of mythology. We estimate it to be perhaps 6.5 ft in length, perhaps 7, although how high it stood (if indeed it could even stand), we do not know.

I've attached photographs. As you can see, the corpse is still firmly embedded in the matrix.

Send us a paleontologist who feels confident that they can safely exhume this thing. Dr Singh of Columbia University is my recommendation, but I leave the decision up to you.

All the best,

James Templeton

Note 1: Letter, from James Templeton to Gregory Jenkins

first choice. And so here you are. Your work on the reconstruction of the *Hypacrosaurus altispinus* specimen was really quite exemplary. And surely there will be a paper in this Kleitos work as well, a first description of a possibly new class or even phylum of the animal kingdom." Jenkins takes out a collection of large, black and white photographs. They show the petrified specimen still half buried in sediment.

The picture shows an animal, half human, half snake, although much of it is still covered by rock. Singh says, "This is definitely not of any known class of animal."

The enclosing matrix looks like limestone, though, which can be as hard as concrete. You let the group know how that Templeton was wise to look for help in excavating his find.

"Unfortunately," Prof. Jenkins says, "there have been complications, which necessitates us sending a larger group of people, a second expedition, if you will." It seems that the letter was the last communication with Dr. Templeton and his team. He has not responded to any further written communication, nor to any radio communiques. A group from the *University of Athens* had visited the island to look for the team, but found the team's rented house on the island abandoned, ransacked, and covered in blood. The local police had said that the body of a half eaten goat had

Beware the darkness from which they climb. Seekers will be watched.

Note 2: A letter in Arabic. The right edge is stained a rusty brown.

been found on their kitchen table, and that the team was suspected of being involved in some dark cult.

Worse, the team's camp at the Acropolis was full of bullet holes, which the police explained as being the by product of a populous keen on chasing the archaeologists from the island. No bodies have been found, and a fisherman had reported that the archaeologists had hired him to transport them to Athens. The local police have assumed that Templeton and his team left the island of their own free will.

The teams current whereabouts are unknown — if they had even reached Athens at all.

"This is an important find, not only to the University, but to the scientific community at large. It might not only shift our understanding of animal biology and evolutionary history, but of our own history. And so I want the four of you to go to Kleitos, secure the find, and to reach the bottom of whatever the hell is happening on that island."

"**Dr Bowen**, you have, um —" and here Jenkins seems a bit uncomfortable, "— a reputation. As a bit of a maverick, with a good feeling for violence and when to employ it. And while I hope those skills won't be required, we need someone like you to help secure the site, ensure the safety of the team members, and to lead the investigation into what happened to Dr. Templeton and his team on the island. If they're still on the island, find them if you can. If they've met an untimely demise, inform the authorities."

"**Professor Giles**, why I asked you hear is pretty straight forward. Your knowledge of ancient Greek history, language and mythology is unsurpassed. Your translation of Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey* are standards works in our undergraduate courses. This, and you're, um, devotion to Nyx will provide insights into the minds of any possible cultists on the island. And I understand that you're also fairly familiar with Arabic, yes?" Jenkins hands Giles note 2.

Giles reads the letter, then says, "Well, it's written in a combination of classical and modern standard Arabic. Let me translate it," and then reads the translation. "I can't say I recognize or understand the reference, though."

Dr. Wrona speaks up: "Beware the darkness from which they climb. That's a reference from the Book of the Dead, an occult text."

"The Book of the Dead?" Jenkins says. "I haven't heard of it. But that is why I want you here, **Dr. Wrona** — your studies in the occult intrigue me. We seem to have some cultist group involved in this, and your studies in the mind of the cultist and the superstitious might come in useful. I was hoping that you and Professor Giles could determine what cult activities Dr. Templeton was involved in, and to support Dr. Bowen in uncovering the truth of Dr Templeton and his lost team."

Prof. Jenkins has booked you all rooms on the RMS Queen Mary, thus beginning your trip across the Atlantic and continental Europe. In addition, the department has **provided the team with**

\$1000, which you convert to 150 000 Drachma in Athens. You and the others are aware of the high purchasing power of this money, and go about **buying what gear you feel you might need** on Kleitos island.

You then find a small sailing vessel, a fisherman's boat, to take you on the trip to Kleitos. The fisherman is **Joachim Georgiadis**, and he helps the four of you to load your belongings.

The next day a fog settles in around the ship, and apart from the breeze all is still. The sun begins to set, but Joachim seems to know where he is going, and says that you will soon be at your destination: the port of Magnisias, Kleitos island.

Kleitos Island

This is what you're told about the island: Kleitos is a small island. It has only one town, **Magnisias**, which lies on its southern coastline. Magnisias has seen use as a fishing village and port since antiquity. At the island's center, on a hilltop, lies the **Acropolis Achlys**. The ruins are now completely abandoned, and Dr. Templeton's team had reported that few of the island's small population of residents ever visited.

Kleitos has no electricity and few cars. Carts, donkeys and mules are still in common use.

What you know of the others

Dr. Wrona: you have not heard of them before, and you distrust their charismatic self-assurance.

Dr. Singh: has been making their name in excavating and reporting on various fossil specimens. Paleontology doesn't interest you much, though, and you have never met.

Prof. Giles: you have briefly met at a conference on Greek Antiquity, and have even used some of their translations in your work. They seem like a solid scholar, with strangely deep insights into the nature of Greek mystery cults.

Dr. Templeton: you've often met at conferences and occasionally in field expeditions. He's a sly, tricky fellow, good at what he does.

Attributes

ST	11	HP	13	Languages: Fluent English (written / spoken) Broken Greek (spoken) Arabic (written / spoken)				
DX	12	Will	10					
IQ	10	Per	10					
HT	10	FP	10					
Basic Lift		24 pounds		Damage	Thrust	1d-1	Swing	1d+1
Basic Speed		5.5		Basic Move		5		

Skills

Name	Level
History (Greek, Middle Eastern)	11
Guns	14

Knives	12
Explosives	11
Archeology	12
Geology	11
Streetwise	10
Intimidation	13
Survival	10
Tracking	9
Dodge	9
Parry	8 (with knife)

Advantages and Disadvantages

- **Absolute direction:** You always know what direction you are facing, even when underground or blind-folded.
- **Fighting fatigue:** Even though you find violence and intimidation useful and vital tools for you, you suffer from the after effects of violent encounters. At the end of a violent encounter *that you were directly involved in*, you begin to shake. All physical actions are at -2 for the next hour, although a successful will roll will temporarily negate this. Also, after combat, roll will. On a fail, you throw up violently.

Inventory

- A revolver that holds six bullets. Damage: 2d-1
- 6 spare bullets
- A large knife. Damage: swing -2 (cutting damage) or thrust (impaling damage)
- A box of cigars and a Zippo lighter

Some Rules

The game is only played with 3d6s.

The basic mechanic is simple: every action that something important depends on and that is non-trivial should probably be rolled for. Choose one of the character's attributes (innate abilities) or skills (learned abilities). The player rolls 3d6, sums up the value, and if it is less than or equal to the score, they **succeed**.

A roll of 3 or 4 is a **critical success**. Have something extra good happen.

A roll of 17 or 18 is a **critical failure**. Have something bad happen. The gun jams. The radio shorts.